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## THE OLD-TIME HOUSE

BY ARTHUR C. BROOKS

THE popular definition of the expression Colonial Architecture designates it as signifying all of our efforts along building lines extending from the first shabby little cottages of the original colonists up to a hundred or so years ago, to the handsome dwellings of the period of foreign affectation, or, technically, the Greek Classic, which made its advent during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The student of architecture has divided the three hundred years of our building existence into four main classes or periods, each of these being set off from the others by limits of decided exactness.

We discover that the first period, Colonial, was confined solely to the seventeenth century. Immediately after came the Provincial Period, in the wake of an influx of unprecedented wealth, and terminating in the Revolution. Then came the Federal Period, with houses more elaborate and exquisite than ever before. The houses of this period are unqualifiedly the best examples of our early domestic architecture. The last division closed in 1800 or thereabouts, giving precedence to Classicism, which raged from one end of the country to the other.

It has been found advisable to draw material for pictorial and written illustration from a single town. Salem, in Massachusetts, being one of the first places of settlement sequent to the Pilgrim's landing-place, furnishes material of such delightful historical piquancy and architectural superbness as undoubtedly to qualify it for this important service.

The Colonial Period had at its inception dwellings of which there are now none extant. From the point of view of sentiment this is lamentable, but as an artistic consideration there was nothing in them to deserve preservation, as they were nothing more than rude, clay-chinked cabins with thatched roofs, hastily thrown together from the rough materials then available. The great chimneys leading from enormous fireplaces were their only redeeming feature; one of these sometimes usurping all of one side of the ubiquitous "fire-room."

With the coming of greater prosperity came the

demand for better housing. John Endicott, the first provincial Governor, sent to England for workmen, who initiated the frame house, its size varying in accordance with the means of the owner. All of these were two stories in height, and the better ones possessed one or more peaks. They became very popular throughout the colonies because of their superiority over the first abodes. These houses show a marked similarity to the Dutch type of dwelling, and it is not at all unlikely that they had their instigation in the prolonged stay of the Pilgrims in Holland. Another feature occurs in their having a superabundance of interior space not in accord with the impression one receives from the outside; the number of rooms contained in the average house being almost unbelievable, and of equally incredible size. An addition to the frame house, the lean-to,

was universal around the middle of the century, and was a result of the old English law pronouncing the eldest son heir to the homestead and giving him the right to live under its roof with his family.

In Salem, the Turner house, more familiarly termed the House of the Seven Gables not only accurately represents the genuine Colonial house, but

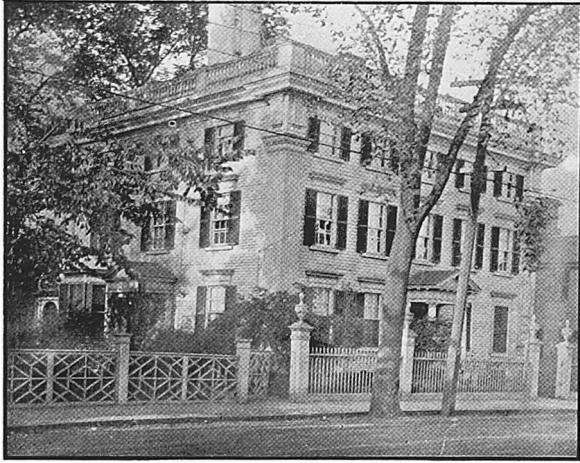


JOHN WARD HOUSE

has a history of inimitable interest, not the least of which was Hawthorne's use of it as the prototype for his celebrated romance of the same name.

It stands to-day in splendid if somber dignity, its dun-colored clapboards and general appearance of dinginess mute testimonials to many years of existence. The original plan of this house shows that it was built with eight gables. Since then successive owners have added and taken away various wings and gables, but even so it is quite like Hawthorne's written description.

In 1669 the house was built by one John Turner, a Salem merchant. It descended by the aforementioned law to his son and then to the latter's son, both of the same name. The last Turner sold it in 1782 to Captain Samuel Ingersoll, whose wife was cousin to the elder Hawthorne. The next owner was their daughter Susannah, who inherited the estate and a considerable fortune while still a young



PIERCE-NICHOLS HOUSE

woman. She was fond of society and entertained a great deal, but in the midst of a joyous existence she contracted an unpleasant love entanglement, and, with spirit crushed, retired to the many-gabled home to live the life of a recluse. For the next few years her only companion was a semi-witted servant girl. Then she adopted a young boy of dubious birth, and to the promptings of a heart starved with long years of self-denial lavished every kindness upon him, educating him for the ministry. At her death the foster-son became owner of the house and her entire wealth. He dissipated the last within a short time, and eventually was forced to sell the house, in 1879, at the behest of creditors. From then on it passed through several hands, up to 1908, when it became a settlement house for the younger members of the community.

Another example of the Colonial Period is the John Ward house of 1684, the style of whose quaint, diamond-paned windows was a direct importation from England, and whose superfluity of gables pronounce the builder one of the wealthier colonists. The addition at the left is a survival of the lean-to, and at one time was maintained by a shopkeeper.

This house is shown as an exemplar of the second story "over-hang." At least two reasons for the existence of this peculiar feature have been advanced by authorities on historical architecture. One claims it meant protection for the inhabitants the while they cast boiling pitch, molten lead and scalding water down upon the shaved head of red-skinned marauders who encircled the house with sinister intent. With provoking calmness the other squelches

this fascinating explanation with the cool assurance that it was simply a fashion at that time, popular in the mother country and therefore accepted here. But, for the imaginative, there is a certain satisfaction to be found in the fact that more than one muzzle-loader has nosed its way through those tiny



SALEM CUSTOM HOUSE

windows, to send leaden death down to the assailants below.

The beginning of the eighteenth century gave entrance to the Provincial Period, which, following the general trend of our architectural progression, brought with it houses more luxurious than ever

before, as accompanists to a steadily increasing prosperity. In the first quarter of the century was introduced the beginning phase of the Georgian influence, as an echo of the Renaissance, in which were copied freely the then prevailing modes of the reigns of Queen Anne and the Georges of England. The Ropes Memorial of 1719 is suggestive of the style just mentioned. With the exception of



HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

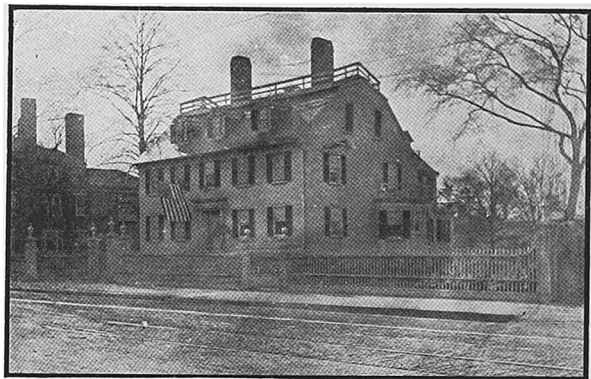
the roof this house is a good specimen of the Queen Anne style.

About 1740 entered the Mansard style, sired by the famous French architect, Charles Mansard, who lived a century before its adoption in America. It embraced the gambrel roof, recently referred to, projecting attic windows and certain external ornaments. While it was then one hundred years old in Europe it has never lost its appeal, being still popular both there and here.

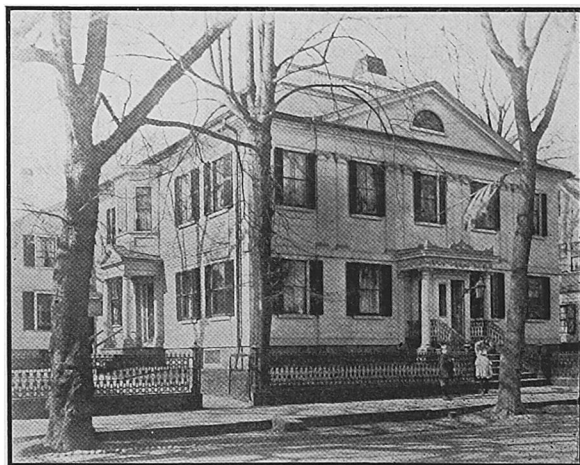
Following the close of the war for independence came the Federal Period, incorporating the third

and last phase of the Georgian style, but with such distinctive native originality of construction and ornamentation as easily to claim the right of an entirely new variety in itself, fittingly called the real period of domestic architecture.

The Assembly House in Federal Street was built



ROPES MEMORIAL



ASSEMBLY HOUSE

in 1772 by Samuel MacIntyre, the then foremost New England architect. The gentle handling of the enrichment of the capitals surmounting the pilasters set into the walls, and the simplicity of line of the altogether beautiful whole, are representative of the builder at his finest.

Up these broad, stone steps and under the warm glow of this old lantern have passed many of the

community's élite, the ladies in delicate, flowered silks, and the gentlemen in rich satins and cocked hats. Notably among them were Lafayette, the young Beau Brummel of the American army, who danced here in the evening of October twenty-ninth, the year of the house's erection, and, five years later, Washington, who opened a ball with the blushing belle of the town; then finding a partner

for her—as he did not dance—in Captain Cook, whose house still stands next door.

Analogous to the Assembly House is the Pierce-Nichols house, also in Federal Street. It was built in the same year, 1782, by Jerathemal Pierce, merchant, from plans by the same designer. The superior ornamentation of the roof, windows and corner pilasters of this house prove the universal agreement that unquestionably it is MacIntyre's masterpiece.

During the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century the foreign motive became firmly established in the history of our architecture,

effecting some very stately mansions with a wealth of appeal, which are well executed and do nothing but credit to their makers.

The Andrews Mansion is an example of the idealism of the Greek combined with the practicability of the American. It was built in 1818, the most commercially prosperous year since the Revolution, by War Governor John A. Andrews, and was one of three erected on different sides of Salem Common, then a training field for the soldiery. In later years it was the home for a third of a century of

William C. Endicott, Justice of the Supreme Court and a member of President Cleveland's Cabinet. The Andrews house is well deserving of the decision that it is the handsomest structure in the vicinity. Every brick entering its construction was dipped into boiling oil before being put into place, and the supporting pillars, including the magnificent columns glimpsed through the leaves of the tree at the left of the photograph and



ANDREWS MANSION

overlooking a typical old-fashioned garden, were packed with crude rock salt as a preventive of decay from dampness.

The Salem Custom House is one of the closing works of the architect, MacIntyre, and is exhibitiv of that originator's disregard of the conventions of his profession.

From 1846 to 1849 Nathaniel Hawthorne was Surveyor of the Port here, occupying the office on the first floor, of which the window is to the left of the entrance. It is said that the prompting for the "Scarlet Letter" came to him while he was pacing a back room in the building, used for the storage.